

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9790

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1051

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN POLICY ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REF: SINGAPORE 0306

1. REFTEL REPORTS AMBASSADOR'S INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH SWEDISH CHARGE AND NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR ON SOCIAL OCCASION, DURING WHICH AMBASSADOR GENTLY PRESSED BOTH ON THEIR COUNTRIES' RATHER UNIMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE IN ASSISTING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. BOTH OF THEM INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD PASS AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

2. FOLLOWING THIS CONVERSATION, NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR DID IN FACT FOLLOW-UP WITH HIS GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED FROM HIM TEXT OF A NORWEGIAN STATEMENT ON INDOCHINA REFUGEES MADE TO NATO POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 7. (COVERING LETTER FROM NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT "SINCE THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE, THE NORWEGIAN M/T "SPINANGER" PICKED UP TEN VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ON WAY FROM THE PHILIPPINES TO SINGAPORE WHERE THE SHIP

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ARRIVED ON 14 FEBRUARY AND THE REFUGEES DISEMBARKED THE SHIP ON 15 FEBRUARY.") IN THE THOUGHT THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT HAVE COPY OF NORWEGIAN STATEMENT OF FEBRUARY 7, TEXT IS GIVEN BELOW:

QUOTE. SUBJECT: INDOCHINA REFUGEE SITUATION. WITH REFERENCE TO I.A. THE NOTE DISTRIBUTED BY THE US DELEGATION 13 DECEMBER

LAST, THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION IS PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO GIVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON THE NORWEGIAN ASSISTANCE TO INDOCHINESE REFUGEES:

1. SINCE THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR, NORWAY HAS RECEIVED ABOUT 250 REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA, MOST OF WHOM VIETNAMESE HAVING BEEN PICKED UP BY NORWEGIAN SHIPS.

2. IN THE COURSE OF ONLY THE LAST SIX MONTHS, NORWEGIAN SHIPS HAVE PICKED UP ABOUT 250 BOAT REFUGEES, OF WHOM 57 HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED IN NORWAY, AND ANOTHER 54 OF THE REMAINING SHALL PROBABLY ALSO BE RECEIVED.

CONSIDERING THE GREAT NUMBER OF NORWEGIAN SHIPS OPERATING IN THOSE WATERS, WE HAVE TO ENVISAGE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO RECEIVE VIETNAMESE BOAT REFUGEES QUITE REGULARLY. OUR RECEPTION CAPACITY FOR REFUGEES IN GENERAL IS, HOWEVER, ALREADY OVERLOADED, AND IT IS UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES DIFFICULT TO PROVIDE SATISFACTORY HOUSING AND OCCUPATION POSSIBILITIES FOR REFUGEES IN NORWAY.

3. IN AGREEMENT WITH THE ROYAL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE NORWEGIAN SHIPOWNERS' ASSOCIATION HAS INSTRUCTED NORWEGIAN SHIPS TO OFFER ALL ASSISTANCE THAT THE SITUATION WARRANTS TO BOAT REFUGEES, INCLUDING PICKING THEM UP AND BRINGING THEM TO HARBOUR.

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4. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR MAIN EFFORT IN THIS FIELD WILL HAVE TO BE DIRECTED TOWARDS OFFERING HELP ON THE SPOT WHERE THE REFUGEES ARE LOCATED. THUS, SINCE THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR, NORWAY HAS GIVEN MORE THAN 50 MILLION NORWEGIAN KRONER (EQUIVALENT TO ABOUT 9.5 MILLION US DOLLARS), MAINLY THROUGH UNHCR AND THE RED CROSS, AS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASSISTANCE TO INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.
UNQUOTE.
HOLDRIDGE

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